

Message Text

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47

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 SAJ-01

TRSE-00 FRB-03 CIEP-03 DRC-01 /128 W

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P R 061307Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3626

INFO: RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN 6473

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, UK

SUBJECT: WILSON AT THE TUC - "CALL FOR A UNITED NATION"

REF: LONDON 11319

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: HAROLD WILSON'S LONG-HERALDED APPEAR-
ANCE BEFORE THE TUC CONGRESS AT BRIGHTON (SEPT. 5)
SERVED AS A KICK-OFF RALLY FOR THE NEXT ELECTION --
ALTHOUGH THE DATE HAS YET TO BE FIXED. END SUMMARY

2. HE DELIVERED A SOBER AND "HIGH-ROAD SPEECH," WHICH,
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WHILE SANCTIFYING THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, LOOKED BEYOND

ELECTION DAY TO A GENUINELY "UNITED NATION" UNDER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE. THE SPEECH CONTAINED LESS THAN THE AVERAGE PORTION OF VITRIOL WHICH WILSON NORMALLY RESERVES FOR THE CONSERVATIVES AND IT EMPHASIZED CONCILIATION VS. CONFLICT DURING THE GRIM DAYS WHICH WILSON ANTICIPATES FOR THE BRITISH ECONOMY DURING THE NEXT TWO YEARS. (EVEN HIS BRIEF REFERENCE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WAS COUCHED IN MORE CONCILIATORY TERMS THAN USUAL.) IN HIS ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE FOR THE TUC, JACK JONES EMOTIONALLY DECLARED THAT A "VOTE FOR LABOR WOULD BE A VOTE FOR THE NEW JERUSALEM."

3. THE PRIME MINISTER BASED HIS CONCEPT OF A "UNITED NATION ON THE HIGHEST FACTOR OF NATIONAL UNITY ... WHICH REQUIRES SACRIFICES FROM US ALL," FROM THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, FROM INDUSTRIAL AND MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS, AND FROM "NO LESS POWERFUL FINANCIAL COMPLEXES; FROM VESTED INTERESTS OF EVERY KIND."

4. WILSON PAINTED IN GRIMEST TERMS THE PICTURE WHICH PREVAILED BEFORE THE LABOR GOVERNMENT CAME TO POWER -- A "THREE-DAY WEEK ... DEPLETED WAGE PACKETS ... TWO MILLION UNEMPLOYED OR LAID OFF ... A NATION DIVIDED." AND, LIKE CALLAGHAN BEFORE HIM (REF LONDON 11293), HE DESCRIBED HOW QUICKLY THE LABOR GOVERNMENT GOT THE COUNTRY BACK TO WORK AND HOW QUICKLY IT FULFILLED ITS ELECTION PROMISES ON LABOR LEGISLATION, PENSIONS, PRICES, ESPECIALLY THOSE ON FOOD, AND IN OTHER AREAS. HE DECLARED, "NO OTHER GOVERNMENT IN BRITISH HISTORY CAN MATCH THE RECORD OF THE ADMINISTRATION OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS." THE FOUNDATION OF THIS PROGRAM WAS, WILSON DECLARED, "A SOCIAL CONTRACT BETWEEN ALL OUR PEOPLE WHO ARE CONCERNED TO PUT THEIR BACKS INTO THE TASKS OF RESTORING OUR LOST PRODUCTION AND ASSETS AND RENEWING OUR DRIVE IN WORLD EXPORT MARKETS." AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID, ALL PARTIES WERE AGREED "ON THE GRAVITY OF THE NATIONAL CRISIS." HE WARNED THAT "WE CANNOT EXPECT ANY SIGNIFICANT INCREASES, IN LIVING STANDARDS OVERALL IN THE NEXT YEAR OR TWO." HE ADDED THAT "IT WILL BE A TREMENDOUS CHALLENGE TO OUR STATESMANSHIP EVEN TO MAINTAIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AVERAGE LIVING STANDARDS." (WILSON ALSO REMINDED THE UNIONS OF THEIR OWN COMMITMENTS ENDORSED BY THE CONGRESS JUST THE DAY BEFORE THAT WHILE THEY HAVE BEEN COMPENSATED FOR PRICE INCREASES THROUGH THRESHOLD AGREEMENTS (ESCALATOR CLAUSES), "THERE MUST BE NO SEEKING TO MEET THESE COSTS A SECOND TIME OVER, BY DEMANDING OR EXTRACTING WAGE CLAIMS FOR THE COMING YEAR."

5. THE PRIME MINISTER EMPHASIZED THAT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT HAD INHERITED MONUMENTAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FROM THE CONSERVATIVES, INCLUDING INFLATION, AND A WIDER TRADE GAP. BUT HIS ACCENT WAS ON THE FUTURE -- ON "INTERDEPENDENCE" OF ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY, INCLUDING THE FINANCIAL COMMUNITY, INDUSTRY AND THE TRADE UNIONS. HE SAID, "IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS WE HAVE LEARNED HOW TOTALLY DEPENDENT WE ARE, EACH UPON THE OTHER. EVERY ONE OF US KNOWS WE CAN INFLICT SERIOUS AND OFTEN TERRIBLE DAMAGE UPON SOME OTHER SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY. THERE IS NO NEED TO GO ON FLEXING OUR MUSCLES TO PROVE IT." WILSON EXPANDED THE SCENE OF INTERDEPENDENCE TO THE WIDER WORLD AND HIS BRIEF REFERENCE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, TOO, WAS COUCHED IN MORE CONCILIATORY LANGUAGE THAN USUAL. GIVEN THE RIGHT TERMS, GIVEN THE FULL-HEARTED CONSENT OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE, MEMBERSHIP OF THE REFORMED, REVIVIFIED, AND MORE REALISTIC EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COULD BE THE BASIS OF EUROPEAN INTERDEPENDENCE AND LEAD "TO A WIDER UNITY EAST AND WEST."

6. COMMENT: THOUGH WILSON'S SPEECH MAY NOT HAVE RESOUNDED WITH CHURCHILLIAN ELOQUENCE AND MAY HAVE LACKED THE USUAL SUPPLY OF BARBS AGAINST THE CONSERVATIVES TO DELIGHT HIS TRADE UNION AUDIENCE, IT WAS ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED BY DELEGATES -- NOW VERY TIRED AFTER MANY DAYS OF BRAVING BRIGHTON'S HURRICANE-LIKE WINDS AND RAINS. HOWEVER, IF IT WAS LESS THAN A STIRRING CALL TO AN ELECTORAL BATTLE -- FOR WHICH IN ANY EVENT NO SPECIFIC DATE HAS YET BEEN FIXED -- IT SET A FAIRLY CONSTRUCTIVE TONE IN ITS CALL FOR UNITY AND PRESAGED A LIKELY "HIGH-ROAD CAMPAIGN" BY WILSON HIMSELF WHEN THE CAMPAIGN DOES ACTUALLY BEGIN. IT GAVE A SOBER PREVIEW OF THE SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BRITAIN FACES AHEAD AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INDICATED THAT MANY BRITISH BELTS WILL HAVE TO BE TIGHTENED IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH THE ECONOMIC CRISIS.

7. LABOR PARTY CHAIRMAN CALLAGHAN, WHO REMAINED IN BRIGHTON FOR MOST OF THE CONGRESS, TOLD THE EMBASSY LABOR ATTACHE THAT HE WAS NOW LESS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE SOCIAL CONTRACT THAN HE HAD BEEN EARLIER. HE TOLD US THAT THE LEADERS OF THE TUC UNIONS ARE AWARE OF THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION, THAT THEY WERE LOOKING AT THINGS SOBERLY, AND THEY "WILL ACT IN A RESPONSIBLE WAY" IN DOING THEIR PART TO LIVE UP TO THE SOCIAL CONTRACT AFTER THEY LEAVE BRIGHTON. THE TEST OF THIS ASSERTION, OF COURSE, WILL COME LATER THIS YEAR AND NEXT WINTER. (TUC DECISIONS ON COMMUNITY AND OTHER MATTERS WILL BE REPORTED IN SEPTTEL).

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